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# Court of Claims

## FY2007 ANNUAL REPORT

On behalf of the judges, commissioners and staff of the Illinois Court of Claims, I am pleased to present this FY2007 Annual Report. The accomplishments summarized reflect the dedication and hard work of Court of Claims employees as well as the offices of the Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State. I also thank the members of the General Assembly for their continued support.



Technology enhancements in FY2007 allowed documents to be viewed online in real-time by Judges, Commissioners, and Attorney General employees. The Court has further improved customer service and efficiency by implementing training standards for employees and setting individual goals. Finally, our efforts to inform and educate the people of Illinois about Crime Victims Compensation available to elderly victims have been very successful.

I look forward to continuing our efforts toward achieving a Court that provides efficient services to the people of Illinois, and ensures that eligible applicants get the compensation they deserve. I applaud the accomplishments of everyone involved. Each of you is an essential part of the system, and I thank you for your service to the State of Illinois.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Secretary of State  
Ex-officio Clerk of the Court of Claims

Established in July 1906, the Court of Claims is a forum of specific jurisdiction to decide the monetary claims and lawsuits against the State of Illinois. The offices of the Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State are involved in the Court of Claims.

The seven judges on the court serve six-year terms and are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. One judge is designated by the Governor as chief justice. The judges' orders serve as recommendations to the General Assembly to appropriate payment of claims. The 16 commissioners appointed by the Court conduct trials, take evidence and make recommendations to the Court in the region of the state where they reside. The Attorney General represents the State of Illinois on all matters. The Secretary of State serves as ex-officio clerk of the Court of Claims. The Clerk's Office fulfills its statutory duty by providing support services to the judges, commissioners and claimants, and by disbursing monetary awards.

In addition to the exclusive jurisdiction in matters against the state, the Court of Claims also administers claims under the following Acts:

- Line of Duty Compensation Act – Provides for compensation to beneficiaries of state or local government employees killed in the line of duty.
- Illinois National Guardsmen and Naval Militiamen's Compensation Act – Provides for compensation to beneficiaries of Guard and Navy personnel killed in the line of duty during state service (not on active military duty pursuant to an order of the President of the United States). An amendment to the Act now allows compensation for military personnel killed in connection with Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- Illinois Crime Victims Compensation Act – Provides for compensation to innocent victims of violent crimes who have inadequate insurance or funds to cover expenses associated with the crime, including medical bills, counseling, lost wages and other expenses.

**VISION** The Clerk's Office of the Illinois Court of Claims will be recognized as one of the premier Secretary of State agencies that provides excellent customer service by maintaining a highly trained and professional workforce that uses progressive court management technologies.

**MISSION** In pursuit of providing the highest standard of service, the Clerk's Office of the Illinois Court of Claims will:

- Maintain and ensure the integrity of the official records and case files of the Court.
- Provide prompt, friendly and efficient support services to the general public, judges, commissioners and other constituents.
- Ensure that awards made by the Court are processed in an expeditious manner.



## Court of Claims Judges

**Robert J. Sprague, Chief Justice**  
Chief Justice Sprague received his B.S. degree from St. Louis University and his J.D. degree, cum laude, from St. Louis University Law School. He has served as an associate circuit judge and is a member of the Illinois and American Trial Lawyers Associations. He was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2003 and practices law with Sprague & Urban in Belleville.

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### Peter J. Birnbaum

Judge Birnbaum received his B.A. degree from the University of Iowa and his J.D. degree from IIT/Chicago-Kent College of Law. He is employed by Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc., serving as president and CEO since 1991. He was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2004.

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### Norma F. Jann

Judge Jann received her B.A. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her J.D. degree from DePaul University College of Law. She served as a commissioner of the Court of Claims from 1987 until her appointment as a judge in 1991.

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### James L. Kaplan

Judge Kaplan received his B.A. degree from the University of Arizona and his J.D. degree from IIT/Chicago-Kent College of Law. He is a past chair of the Illinois Board of Higher Education and is an overseer for his law school. He was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2005 and is a partner in the law firm of Kaplan & Sorosky, Ltd., in Chicago.

# 2007 Year

## Technology

The Clerk's Office staff accelerated the ongoing transition of electronic imaging of court cases on Content Manager and completed scanning all previously opened files for the past 10 years. The continued process of scanning all open and closed files received in the office ensures that all information is retrievable and backed up in case of an emergency.

## Staff Development

The Clerk's Office staff performed a wide array of duties assisting commissioners, judges, the Attorney General's office and constituents. Cross-training was implemented to enhance the efficiency of overall office operations and to make staff aware of how each individual's job impacts other processes within the department. Staff positions were re-evaluated and where necessary, modification of duties implemented, resulting in two positions being upgraded. Additional training on archives and records retention also was established.

## Programs

**Assistance to Elderly Victims of Violence** – Training seminars about assistance available to the elderly through the Crime Victims Compensation Act were presented to constituents from more than 40 Illinois cities and counties. The outreach program raises awareness about crimes against the elderly and serves as a networking venue for attendees by informing them about related programs in their communities. The Court of Claims was certified to provide Continuing Education Units to attendees of the training seminars through Lincoln Land Community College.

**Line of Duty/Military Compensation Acts** – An amendment to the Illinois National Guardsmen's and Naval Militiamen's Compensation Act now allows compensation to beneficiaries of Illinois military personnel killed in connection with Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom. During FY2007, 39 Line of Duty and Military Compensation claims were filed.

## Accomplishments

During FY2007, the Court of Claims processed 10,191 new general and Crime Victims Compensation claims; 6,366 awards totaling \$50,767,751; 3,146 denials; and 730 dismissals. Crime Victims Compensation cases totaled 6,668. Battery cases represented 44 percent of the total cases filed, followed by

*The accomplishments reflect the hard work of employees as well as the Governor and Secretary*



Robert J. Sprague



Peter J. Birnbaum



Norma F. Jann



James L. Kaplan



assault (16 percent), miscellaneous (10 percent), murder (9 percent), child/sex abuse (7 percent) and domestic violence (6 percent).

Lapsed appropriation claims made up 86 percent of the general claims filed in FY2007. A lapsed appropriation claim is filed when services or materials provided to the State of Illinois have been denied solely because of a lapsed appropriation.

General and Crime Victims Compensation awards funding comes from state and federal sources. The State of Illinois received 60 percent of its Crime Victims Compensation funding from the federal government and the remainder came from the state's general fund. See Five-Year Claims Summaries on back for more details on awards.

The Court of Claims was authorized to issue all subpoenas on behalf of requesting parties with a valid request against the State of Illinois. To date, 72 subpoenas have been issued by the Court.

## Assistance to Elderly Victims of Violence

Secretary White launched an effort in August 2006 to promote awareness about compensation available to elderly victims of violent crimes under the Crime Victims Compensation Act. The Assistance to Elderly Victims of Violence outreach program is a cooperative effort among the following agencies: Office of the Attorney General, Illinois State Library, Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Illinois Department on Aging, and the Illinois State Police Special Victims Division.

Last year, only 91 elderly individuals applied for Crime Victims Compensation out of the more than 6,486 total applicants. The goal of the outreach program is to provide the general public, local elderly advocates, law enforcement and library personnel a better understanding of the impact of crime upon its victims, an explanation of victims' legal rights and options, and an opportunity to connect with local elderly and domestic violence organizations. Training seminars address topics such as Crime Victims Compensation eligibility requirements and application process, elder abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse, and financial fraud. Informational packets are provided to all attendees.

During FY2007, the Assistance to Elderly Victims of Violence program was certified to offer Continuing Education Credits for attendees through Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield.

### David Reid

Judge Reid received his B.A. degree from Southern Illinois University, his J.D. degree from the University of Miami Law School, his LLM degree from Emory University, and his master's in public administration from the University of Illinois at Springfield. He was appointed a commissioner of the Court of Claims in 2003 and appointed a judge in 2007. He practices law with the Reid Law Office in Springfield.

### Robert J. Steffen

Judge Steffen received his B.S. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and his J.D. degree from The John Marshall Law School. He served as an assistant state's attorney in Kane County from 1992 to 2000. He was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2004 and practices law with the firm of Steffen, Kelly & Steffen in Elgin.

### Donald J. Storino

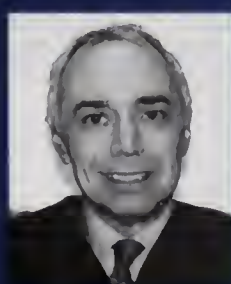
Judge Storino received his A.B. degree, cum laude, from the University of Notre Dame and his J.D. degree from DePaul University College of Law. He was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2004 and to the University of Notre Dame Law School Council in 2005. He practices law with the firm of Storino, Ramello & Durkin in Rosemont.



David Reid



Robert J. Steffen



Donald J. Storino

## Commissioners

Cook County  
Louis Apostol  
George Argionis  
Andrea Buford  
Joseph Cavanaugh  
Christine Curran  
Maritz Martinez  
Lourdes Monteagudo  
Mary Nicolau  
Elizabeth Rochford  
Ron Serpico

Sangamon County  
Tim Timoney

St. Claire County  
Thomas Ysursa

Will County  
David Neal

Williamson County  
Patricia Murphy

Winnebago County  
Gregory Tuite

## Officials

Court Administrator  
Matthew Finnell  
  
Counsel to the Court  
Michael Mathis  
  
Deputy Court  
Administrator/Fiscal Officer  
Bill Kline  
  
Executive Assistant  
Tiffany Kretzinger  
  
Private Secretary  
Peggy Pohlman

## Administrative Staff

Director & Deputy Clerk  
Delores J. Martin  
  
Assistant to the Director  
Annetta Sargent  
  
Administrative Assistant  
Ruth Ann Vincent  
  
Secretary  
Yasna Frier  
  
Crime Victims Outreach  
Program  
Rosemary Thomas

## Support Staff

Willie Coleman  
Alison Doherty  
Erin Foley  
Angela Harris  
Donna Hogan  
Theresa Oller  
Kristine Rice Van-Houten  
Kent Weil

### Five-Year Annual Claims Summary – General

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Awarded	2,935	2,258	3,028	3,683	3,978
Denials	46	136	177	134	191
Dismissed	604	584	759	660	734
Total Decisions	3,585	2,978	3,964	4,477	4,903

### Five-Year Annual Claims Summary – Crime Victims

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Awarded	3,431	3,339	2,879	3,094	3,621
Denials	3,100	2,346	2,361	2,707	2,386
Dismissed	126	55	104	140	265
Total Decisions	6,657	5,740	5,344	5,941	6,272